



NOTICE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, and STAFF
Lead Testing of School Drinking Water
November 30, 2016

Safe and healthy school environments can foster healthy and successful children. To protect public health, the Public Health Law and New York State Health Department (NYSDOH) regulations require that all public schools and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) test lead levels in water from every outlet that is being used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb), which is equal to 15 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$), the NYSDOH requires that the school take action to reduce the exposure to lead.

What is first draw testing of school drinking water for lead?

The “on-again, off-again” nature of water use at most schools can raise lead levels in school drinking water. Water that remains in pipes overnight, over a weekend, or over vacation periods stays in contact with lead pipes or lead solder and, as a result, could contain higher levels of lead. This is why schools are required to collect a sample after the water has been sitting in the plumbing system for a certain period of time. This “first draw” sample is likely to show higher levels of lead for that outlet than what you would see if you sampled after using the water continuously. However, even if the first draw sample does not reflect what you would see with continuous usage, it is still important because it can identify outlets that have elevated lead levels.

What are the results of the first draw testing?

As a reminder, The District began testing its drinking water outlets, such as fountains and sinks, in May of 2016. The tests were performed to determine whether excess amounts of lead could be present in drinking water. Water received from municipal water sources is tested on a regular basis for contaminants such as lead, but testing individual fixtures in buildings has shown that lead from piping, solder, or fixtures can leach into the water in small amounts after it has entered the building and before it is used for consumption. The results were shared with parents, guardians and staff on October 28, 2016. (Of those 65 results, two sinks located in the MS/HS kitchen and one sink in the home and careers rooms were above the New York State Department of Health’s threshold of 15 parts per billion of lead in water. These fixtures were all replaced and the sinks were retested.

Additional samples in both the high school and elementary school from other water sources (example bathroom and classroom sinks) have been conducted. As of today the District has received the results for the elementary school and the outside pump house. Out of the additional 51 sinks tested, there were (9) exceedances. Listed below are the locations of the sinks. None of the sinks that exceeded the limit were in the kitchen area or used for drinking purposes.

Location	Exceedance
Library Bathroom Sink	0.021
Room 131 Bathroom Sink	0.082
Room 123 Classroom Sink	0.028
Room 213 Classroom Sink	0.03
Boys Bathroom Sink	.033/.063
Girls Bathroom Sink	.039/.039
Outside Pump house	0.03

What is being done in response to the results?

As a temporary measure these sinks will be posted with a NYSDOH (NYS Department of Health) approved pictogram sign indicating the water is for hand-washing only – not drinking. All of the faucets will be replaced ASAP and then retested. As required the results will be sent to both the Greene County DOH and to the Oneonta DOH for their records. Outlets that tested below the action level remain in service with no restrictions. When the District receives additional test results from the Middle School and High School you will be notified of those results as well.

What are the health effects of lead?

Lead is a metal that can harm children and adults when it gets into their bodies. Lead is a known neurotoxin, particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of children under 6 years old. Lead can harm a young child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Lead exposure during pregnancy may contribute to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. There are many sources of lead exposure in the environment, and it is important to reduce all lead exposures as much as possible. Water testing helps identify and correct possible sources of lead that contribute to exposure from drinking water.

What are the other sources of lead exposure?

Lead is a metal that has been used for centuries for many purposes, resulting in widespread distribution in the environment. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint in older housing, and lead that built up over decades in soil and dust due to historical use of lead in gasoline, paint, and manufacturing. Lead can also be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, foods, plumbing materials, and cosmetics. Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies but drinking water could become a possible source of lead exposure if the building's plumbing contains lead. The primary source of lead exposure for most children with elevated blood-lead levels is lead-based paint.

Should your child be tested for lead?

The risk to an individual child from past exposure to elevated lead in drinking water depends on many factors; for example, a child's age, weight, amount of water consumed, and the amount of lead in the water. Children may also be exposed to other significant sources of lead including paint, soil and dust. Since blood lead testing is the only way to determine a child's blood lead level, parents should discuss their child's health history with their child's physician to determine if blood lead testing is appropriate. Pregnant women or women of childbearing age should also consider discussing this matter with their physician.

Additional Resources:

For more information regarding the testing program or sampling results, contact Tammy J. Sutherland, Superintendent of Schools at (518) 966-5070 Ext. 501, or go to our school website: www.greenville.k12.ny.us

For information about lead in school drinking water, go to:

http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/LeadTestinginSchoolDrinkingWater.html>

For information about NYS Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention, go to:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

For more information on blood lead testing and ways to reduce your child's risk of exposure to lead, see "What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means":

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2526/> (available in ten languages).